1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

302 from the standpoint of the unaccustomed observer. Other designs seen at various times included smears of red or white round the eyes, a series of white lines across the forehead or obliquely across the cheeks, lines of red dots, &c.

[751] [464] Some of this painting has more than a decorative purpose, e.g. a spot of red is put on each temple when starting on a journey, as a protection against the dangers of the road.

302 856 Children's heads are usually kept covered with a mixture of *oin* and coco-nut oil, even if there is no ceremony going on. This is said to make the hair grow and to keep off lice. Some children have their hair rolled into little blobs with a mixture of *oin* and clay.

302 184 856 At Baniu, a village about ten miles east of Kurtatchi, and a few villages farther east of it, but not—at least not now—as far as Tiop on the extreme north-eastern corner, a custom obtains of cutting very short the hair on the front half of the children's heads, and letting the back half grow long. This is done for both sexes. The front half is cut, at a feast, when the child is very small, perhaps two or three years old; the back half remains long for some years more, and is finally cut at a special feast, where the child is given pig to eat for the first time. The reason given to me for this method of hair-dressing is that it makes the child grow strong and healthy. My friends of Kurtatchi said it had never been done in their neighbourhood, although the two districts are in intimate and friendly connexion.

302 593 The father of a boy wearing the *upi* will often let his hair grow long and wear it tied into a bunch at the top of his head (see Pl. 52). This is done because the boy may not cut his own hair; it also shows pride in him. His mother may refrain from cutting her hair short at the temples for the same reason, but does not wear it on the top of her head.

302 581 765 A widow may not cut her hair, but makes it into blobs with clay, without paint, which is forbidden her until a certain stage of the mourning is ended.

302 [412 177] Hair is cut with a sharp-edged shell, usually a species of *Gyrena*, or, nowadays, with a bit of glass, except in the case of those few returned labourers who possess razors or scissors. These lucky ones will often be requested to use their acquisitions on the heads of their friends. Cutting is done in the village, usually on the women's verandah. No special attention is given to the disposal of the ends, which are either thrown away among the other rubbish

Each village has, amongst its older men and women, some with a very fair knowledge of native medicines and also, unfortunately, one or two with a secret knowledge of poisons. The administration of curative and prophylactic medicines is usually accompanied by elaborate rites which the patient must rigidly observe. Contraceptives are commonly used by the women and one herb is claimed to be what might be termed a "contra-contraceptive," *i.e.*, after a woman has been barren for several years, as a result of taking a contraceptive, this herb will make her fertile again. When epidemics occur villages as yet untouched will place small sticks, leaning outwards, on the various roads to ward off the arrival of the spirit of sickness. The sticks are smeared with the spittle of betel-nut, pepper and lime. If the cry of a certain night-bird is heard over a village where a patient lies dangerously ill, it is usual then for any further attempt to combat the illness to cease. Death has spoken. The bird's call is looked upon as the inevitable token of death, and the relations commence to gather together their presents for the dead in readiness for throwing them into the coffin or grave. It is strange, but the cases where to my own knowledge the bird's call has actually preceded the death of a patient have been numerous.

DRUM SIGNALLING ON POROPAN ISLAND

Pororan legend has it that in the days of long ago (*manus*) before drum signalling had been introduced a strange resonant noise was heard coming from the bush by the men of the village one evening. Half fearful investigations were made and it was found that the noise came from a swinging branch beaten by the wind upon a hollow tree. From this sprang the idea of the *tui*, or wooden drum, which is used so extensively throughout Buka, Bougainville and other Melanesian islands.

The making of these drums in the early days, before steel implements were introduced, was a long, tedious and almost sacred performance. In many of the *tui* the aperture at the top is but an inch to an inch and a half in width extending the full length of the drum, while the outer circumference measures in many cases as much as eight feet six inches. Sharpened clam-shells, fastened to spear hafts or long sticks were the only tools used for the work.

5: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930)1935
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A swollen leg is rubbed with the chewed root of *towano* (*Achryanthes aspera*). This plant is reported by Maiden (p. 150) to be "administered in India in cases of dropsy." A condition which I take to be dropsy was thus described: "Suppose someone puts a certain bad leaf (the name of which my informant professed not to know) among some bananas and another person eats them, his belly becomes big just like a pregnant woman's and presently he dies." The word for this condition (*wagiug*) also means "pregnant."

Elephantiasis (*pu*) is not infrequent. There is medicine to relieve the pain in the early stages, but my informants did not know it. Afterwards "it is not painful, it only swells up and then we cannot make any medicine for it."

Epilepsy

I heard of one man who was subject to periodical attacks which would seem to be epileptic fits. They were described as follows: "He falls down on the ground, all his skin is tight, then he dies (*i.e.* becomes unconscious), plenty of white water comes up in his mouth. When he comes to life again he spits it out, he stays all right for a long time, then the sickness comes back again." The treatment is to make a mixture of the leaves of *karavetan* (a creeper) with lime and water. The leaves are rubbed over the man's body and he is given the water to drink.

Tuberculosis

The sickness *unpe'o*, which I take to be tuberculosis of the lung, is thus described: "The man is nothing but skin and bone, he cannot eat, he does nothing but spit, by and bye he spits blood, then he is all right for a little while, then he is ill again." It is thought to be caused by someone making "bad medicine" with the aid of aromatic plants or leaves which have been worn by the affected individual as ornaments. My informant had heard there was a treatment for it, but he did not know it.

Prevention of Sickness

Epidemics are thought to be caused by *urar* (spirits of the dead) who are angry with the people. Certain precautionary measures may be taken. The medicine used generally consists

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The medicine used generally consists of a mixture of dried leaves, roots, etc. with the red powder called *oin* (iron oxide). Packages of this "medicine" are highly valued; not infrequently they have been obtained from the natives of another district and their owners are ignorant of the ingredients used. One such, in my collection, is intended to be rubbed over a person's eyes when he has to walk about at night; this is thought to prevent the *urar* from giving you the disease. Another method is to make a drink from the leaves of *gagē* (*Dryopteris pteroidea*); this must be used frequently throughout the time of sickness.

Convalescence

When a person is recovering after an illness, and is very thin and wasted, the leaves of *bubus*, squeezed into water to make a drink, are given to help him to "get fat quickly." There are also special leaves to be dipped in water and used to rub him down.

Miscellaneous

For the bite of a centipede, chew the root of *wapindi* (a tree) and with your mouth full bite at the place. Sprinkle lime on the leaves and press them on the joints at either side of the bite (*e.g.* if bitten on the forearm, press on the elbow and wrist). For the wound made by a sting-ray, rub the leaves on the place.

To prevent sunstroke, while working in the taro garden, take the leaves of *iag* (*Coleus Blumei var.*), put them in half a coconut shell, fill it with water, and leave it lying in the sun. When you have finished working you must pour the contents of the coconut shell into the fire. To leave it where it is, or to empty it on the ground, will cause rain.

Summary

It will be seen that the natives of north Bougainville practise a variety of curative methods, their technique including the giving of medicine by the mouth; its application externally as we use ointment; the use of a suppository; the use of emetics; the application of counter-irritants: the application of heat in a form comparable to our poultice, and also of smoke; inhaling steam; sniffing aromatic plants; massage, manipulation and pressure. No treatment involving bleeding came to my notice. So far as I could ascertain they do not practise any form of surgery.